

Beginnings – ORIGIN *(Where did we come from?)*

- **Only Two Choices**
- **Realize the Significance**
- **Is it Faith or Science?**
 - LAB - Lookable, Accessible, Breakable
- **Guess at the Evidence**
- **Inspect the Evidence**
 - Universe = "Decay"
 - Age of the Earth = "Can't Say"
 - Origin of Life by Chance = "No Way"
 - Evolution of Species and Man = "Lacks Genes and Tweens"
- **No Compromise**

DON'T - Death, Orders of Creation, Names in genealogies, Ten Commandments refer to seven-day week

Intent of Life – LIFE *(Why are we here?)*

- **Love - GOD and MAN**
- **Increase - GROW**
- **Faithfulness - Time, Talent, Treasure**
- **Eternity – Past, Present, Future**

Authority – POWER *(Who's in charge?)* A God Who is:

- **Personal and Loving**
- **Omnipotent**
- **Wise and All-Knowing**
- **Everywhere and Eternal**
- **Righteous and Reliable**

Standards – RULES *(What are the rules?)* God's rules are:

- **Revealed supernaturally, not derived by reason**
- **Universal and apply to everyone, everywhere, all the time**
- **Loving**
- **Enforced**
- **Steadfast**

N - Neighbors (those who come into my life through situations like the Good Samaritan)

My neighbors are those people God puts into my life because of proximity or because of circumstances. When a self-righteous Jewish expert on the law asked Jesus to define who his neighbor was, Jesus answered him with the parable of the Good Samaritan. At the end of the parable Jesus asked the expert which man was a neighbor to the man who was abused by robbers. The expert rightly answered "The one who had mercy on him" and Jesus said "Go and do likewise." When a person truly needs help and we're in a position to help, loving our neighbor involves showing mercy:

- **Geographic Neighbors** - The people who live close to us are one type of neighbor. To love them we need to look for needs in their lives that we can meet. Philippians 2:4 says "Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others." This may involve helping with some project, loaning some tools, bringing food during sickness, watching out for their home when they are away, etc. But we must also be careful not to force ourselves too much into their lives and become a nuisance. "Seldom set foot in your neighbor's house-- too much of you, and he will hate you." (Proverbs 25:17)
- **Divine Appointment Neighbors** - These are people with needs who briefly come into our lives through unplanned encounters. We should always be sensitive to times when the Holy Spirit impresses us with a sense that we should help someone that we don't know. This might be someone in the grocery checkout line, a man sitting next to us on an airplane, a waitress who seems to need an encouraging word and smile. All of us have those moments of decision, and we need to trust God to lead us in responding correctly. "Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it. Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering." (Hebrews 13:2-3)
- **Secret Neighbors** - God often gives us opportunities to help people in a fairly anonymous way. Showing love to this type of neighbor lets us truly practice unselfish love since we don't expect to receive anything from them in return. Examples might include money or gifts sent to people in other countries, donating blood, praying for people we know only by name, anonymous gifts, and visits to nursing homes. These secret neighbors provide us with opportunities to lay up treasures and receive recognition in heaven. They are also an opportunity to minister with Christ. When you give a gift that only you and God know about, you feel closer to Christ.

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.' (Matthew 25:34-40)

The last six of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:12-17) deal with loving associates and neighbors:

- **Don't Dishonor Parents** – "Honor your father and mother."
- **Don't Murder** - "You shall not murder."
- **Don't Commit Adultery** - "You shall not commit adultery."
- **Don't Steal** - "You shall not steal."
- **Don't Lie** - "You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor."
- **Don't Covet** - "You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."

Enemies?

Jesus also tells us to love our enemies and to pray for those who persecute us (Matthew 5:44). By this we will show that we are sons of the Father and will be following His example. This is a hard saying for us – it's hard enough to love our neighbors even when they aren't enemies.

But when we apply the command to "love others as we would want to be loved" to the topic of enemies, we can see why this is consistent with God's character. **He loved us while we were His enemies – He's not asking us to do anything He hasn't done Himself.**